

## Message Text

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63

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PA-04

PRS-01 USIA-15 AGR-20 EPA-04 SCI-06 SMI-01 DRC-01

/084 W

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R 091520Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SMITHSONIAN OBSERVATORY CAMBRIDGE MASS

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4910

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 0195

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SENV, EAGR, AR.

SUBJECT: FIRES IN LA PAMPA PROVINCE.

REF: UR 040015Z JAN 74.

1. SUMMARY. FIRES IN WOODLANDS OF LA PAMPA PROVINCE REPORTED TO BE WORST IN ARGENTINE HISTORY AND TO HAVE CONSUMED OVER 500,000 HECTARES (1.2 MILLION ACRES). END SUMMARY.

2. FIRST FIRE STARTED DECEMBER 16. FIRES REPORTED AT SEVERAL LOCATIONS IN LA PAMPA PROVINCE, E.G. NEAR GENERAL ACHA, LA REFORMA, TELEN, PUELCHES, PUELEN, CUCHILLO-CO. A FIRE ALSO REPORTED JUST ACCROSS BORDER NEAR JUAN DE GARAY, RIO NEGRO PROVINCE.

3. AREA IS DENSELY FORESTED IN GENERAL. FORESTS REPORTED TO BE HOME FOR SUCH WILD ANIMALS AS BOAR, PUMAS, AND DEER. IN SOME PLACES THERE WERE RANCES WITH CATTLE. TREE TYPES REPORTED TO INCLUDE "PIQUILLIN", "CHANAS", AND "CALDENES". SOME TREES TO BE 300 TO 400 YEARS OLD, OR MORE. A TALL HERB "FLECHILLA" WAS ALSO REPORTED TO GROW IN THESE WOODS.

4. HUMAN POPULATION DENSITY VERY LOW.

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5. AREA AFFECTED: REPORTEDLY "OVER HALF A MILLION HECTARES

(1.2 MILLION ACRES)".

6. ECONOMIC AND BIOLOGICAL DAMAGE: VAST FOREST ACREAGE DESTROYED; ONE REPORT SAYS "THOUSANDS" OF CATTLE DESTROYED; DESTRUCTION OF RANCH FENCES ALONE REPORTED TO AMOUNT TO 1000 MILLION PESOS (ONE MILLION DOLLARS); HUNTING ANIMALS DESTROYED; SOME RURAL INSTALLATIONS DESTROYED; CONFLICTING REPORTS OF WHETHER OR NOT FIRE WAS CAUSE OF POWER LOSS IN EL CHOCON-BUENOS AIRES TRANSMISSION LINE ON DEC. 23. (GREATER BUENOS AIRES WAS TOTALLY WITHOUT POWER FOR THREE HOURS OR SON AND SOME AREAS MUCH LONGER; THIS RESULTED IN DAMAGE TO SOME THERMAL GENERATING UNITS IN THE CITY.) (NOTE: THE FIRE DID NOT REPEAT NOT INVOLVE A REGION OF MAJOR AGRICULTURAL IMPORTANCE , EITHER FOR CATTLE OR CROPS.)

7. DURATION OF FIRES. INITIAL FIRES LASTED 10 DAYS, BUT OTHERS STARTED FROM TIME TO TIME. TOTAL LAPSE OF TIME UNTIL ALL FIRES REPORTED OUT WAS 21 DAYS.

8. FIRES WERE REPORTED TO BE WORST IN RECORDED HISTORY OF ARGENTINA.

9. REPORTS ARE THAT SOME 500 PERSONS WERE INVOLVED IN FIGHTING THE FIRES. METHODS TRIED INCLUDED CLEARING LANES WITH BULLDOZERS AND SHOVELS AND COUNTER-FIRES.

10. WEATHER CONDITIONS: SUNNY AND VERY HOT (ONE REPORT INDICATED 110F) AND GENERALLY WINDY, WITH FREQUENT CHANGES OF WIND DIRECTION. SOME THUNDER STORMS. (NOTE: WHILE RAIN FROM SUCH STORMS HAD SOME ATTENUATING EFFECT, IT IS ALSO APPARENT THAT SOME OF THE FIRES WERE STARTED BY THE LIGHNING).

11. PRESENT STATUS: ALL FIRES WERE REPORTED OUT ON JANUARY 6.

12. AGENCIES INVOLVED IN INVESTINGATING AND CONTROLLING FIRES: DIRECCION PROVINCIAL DE VIALIDAD: DIRECCION DE DEFENSA CIVIL DE LA PAMPA; COMISION NACIONAL DE EMERGENCIA AGROPECUARIA; DIRECCION NACIONAL DE BOSQUES DE LA PAMPA, ALL AFFILIATED WITH PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IN CAPITAL: SANTA ROSA.

13. COMMENT: ABOVE INFORMATION ENTIRELY BASED ON REPORTS IN UNCLASSIFIED

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ARGENTINE PRESS AND MAGAZINES. WE HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT ACCURACY, BUT SOME DISTORTIONS WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, DISASTER REPORTS, FOREST FIRES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 09 JAN 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Errors:** N/A  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** FIRES IN LA PAMPA PROVINCE.  
**TAGS:** SENV, EAGR, AR  
**To:** SMITHSONIAN OBSERVATORY STATE  
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